

Black Newspapers in Danville, Illinois

Erica Kirk
Danville High School, Danville
Teacher: Harith Tamimie

Blacks did not have the same rights as whites throughout American history. Many blacks were not able to read the public newspapers and therefore created their own newspapers. Fredrick Douglass inspired many African Americans because he wrote the *North Star* newspaper. The black newspapers were a way blacks could relax and take the time to enjoy the works of their own people. Blacks did not only use the newspapers for entertainment values, but they also used the newspapers to gain information about the Underground Railroad and other black movements. These newspapers would also warn blacks about upcoming riots against them. There were many black newspapers written in the state of Illinois. The popular newspapers written in Danville were the *Black Vanguard*, the *Illinois Times*, the *International*, and the *Inter-State Echo*.

The *Black Vanguard* was one of the newspapers written in Danville, Illinois. It is a mysterious newspaper because the author and the editor along with the date it was written are unknown. The *Illinois Times* was written from 1939 to 1941, and was edited by Edgar G. Harris. Another newspaper written in Danville was the *International*. It was edited by J. M. Batchman, and was written in 1901 and 1902. Charles W. Colley edited the *Inter-State Echo*, which was also written in Danville from 1909 to 1920. Because these newspapers were underground newspapers, there is not very much definitive information about them. The newspapers probably never left the city of Danville because everyday blacks publicized them. The newspapers

were not published because blacks did not have the wealth or the power to get their works published. Blacks knew they were discriminated against and would not get the chance to write in the local newspapers. The newspapers were also used to pass on the history of blacks to the future generation of black people, so they know all the hardships blacks had to endure.

There were many black newspapers written in Danville in the 1900s. Blacks used these papers to communicate with the black community. They also used them to stay updated on all the events in which blacks were involved. Many blacks just wanted the opportunity to express their feelings on paper and therefore wrote their own newspapers. The newspapers were a way the black community stood together as a group. The *Black Vanguard*, *Illinois Times*, *International*, and the *Inter-State Echo* were a few of the black newspapers written in Danville. Even though the intentions of the black newspapers were to leave a legacy to the future generations of blacks, they are almost difficult to discover, which is disappointing because many people are interested in what black people had to write about their lives during the 1900s. People know the newspapers existed due to the stories about them. If only blacks were given the opportunity to publicize their works, people would know more about their lifelong struggle. The newspapers played an important role in black history. [From Illinois Genealogy Trails History and Genealogy, Inter-State Echo, Oct. 5, 1912 <<http://genealogytrails.com/ill/blacknews.html>> (May 5, 2007).]